

HOME ECONOMISTS AND FARM HOUSING

Responsibilities and opportunities. The home economists part in the farm housing program is to help farm families make improvements that will aid the family in achieving a richer and more satisfying home life. What and how we teach will vary greatly but it will deal with social, economic, psychological, aesthetic, scientific, and managerial aspects of housing. Primarily the home economist uses the "inside of the house" and the functions that the house, furnishings, and equipment are to perform to make everyday living a satisfying experience.

Helping people add to their knowledge may include phases such as over-all house planning, space arrangement, storage and equipment needs, planning for privacy and entertainment, efficiency of work areas and determining how much can be spent on housing without upsetting other family living budgetary needs. Helping people add to their skills in "how to do" activities from simple carpentry repairs to making slip covers, painting and papering, should be an important part. Helping people change their attitudes by aiding them raise their sights on the value of good housing to good living.

What home economists have done cannot be separated from what has been done by other extension staff members, but results not reported in other data worth reviewing include:

Trend in kitchens improved in 1934	50,000
Trend in kitchens improved in 1948	220,000
Trend in kitchens improved in 1949	227,606
Trend in families assisted in selection of house furnishing and equipment in 1934	102,000
" 1948	400,000
" 1949	316,615
Improving arrangement of other rooms in 1949	286,262
Improving methods of repairing, remodeling, or refinishing furniture and furnishings in 1949.	392,162
Improving housekeeping methods in 1949	480,355
4-H Club members completing house furnishing and room arrangement in 1949	110,738
Number of rooms improved	101,552
Number of articles made	458,395

The magnitude of the above knowledge and help rendered farm families indicates that providing "know how" on all phases of farm housing is needed.

Progress in 1949-50.

Home economists have been appointed as co-leaders of the farm housing project in 47 States and 2 Territories.

Standards for functional housing have been established by research staffs of the Agricultural Research Administration, and such standards are being used by Extension Service staffs.

Two home economists have each given 3 months' time to visiting States in Southern and Western regions. They, together with three architects who have done similar work, report:

State Farm housing committees within Extension Service giving direction to programs and aiding all staff members to cooperate to the fullest extent.

Community improvement contests arouse interest, spread good housing, and bring results to attention of public.

A formal organization of State or county educational and service agencies concerned with housing is proving an effective way to coordinate programs.

Farm and home unit demonstrations are a successful method that uses the family approach and locates the farm family when it is interested and can do something to improve its housing.

Techniques to help farm people want better housing need to be developed.

Using a real family situation and analyzing their financial, social, structural, and planning needs as they might develop through an interview method could have further use in "in service" training with county extension workers.

Establishing pilot counties to test needs and methods.

What home economists can do to further a well-rounded farm housing program.

Further research in (a) satisfaction of farm families in improvements made based on Extension Service teaching, (b) arrangement and equipment of houses that will fit family needs under rapidly changing conditions, and (c) adapting the house to the family life cycle.

Reorganize our approach to better housing so house furnishing becomes an integral part of farm housing program.

Develop the farm housing program so it becomes in the minds of people something more than building a structure.

Encourage coordinated programs among all home economics specialists: Clothing specialists on efficient sewing arrangements, food and nutrition specialists on food preparation, serving and cleaning up centers, and family life specialists on functions and arrangement for mental and physical development of children.

Explore ways and means of expanding farm housing work with 4-H Club members and young men and women.

Help people develop their skills and "know how" on all phases of housing.

"Help make the worst better first."

